



Support, Information and a Voice for the Type 1 Community

The Seed Award

Congratulations to our winner!

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Greetings!

It is World Diabetes Day today, and to celebrate we are announcing the winner of the Type 1 Diabetes Network's (T1DN) inaugural Seed Award.



We'd like to introduce you to Cheryl Steele, an amazing woman who is "loud and proud" about her Type 1, and helps others deal with Type 1 issues every day.

All about Cheryl - our amazing winner!



Cheryl Steele is a long-time Type 1 and has worked tirelessly over many years to share her experiences and knowledge with the rest of the Type 1 community.

Cheryl currently works at Western Health in Victoria, as a Manager of [Diabetes Education Services](#). A great mix of managerial and clinical work, she currently sees around 4-8 Type 1s per day for a variety of reasons, including pregnancy, insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitoring. A long-term pumper herself, starting in 1999 when they were

"ancient and clunky things", Cheryl LOVES her pump and enjoys making others' lives easier by teaching them about pumping.

Cheryl "thrives on chaos" and says, "Sometimes I get frustrated with my diabetes because it means I can't always be as spontaneous as I would like." But, she says that her **Type 1 means she has to be more organised** which, she recognises, is probably a good thing.

Cheryl was diagnosed with Type 1 when she was 30, actually after the diagnosis of her 5 year-old daughter. Her son was diagnosed the following year. Cheryl has three "grown-up" children now, as well as grandchildren (some of whom also have Type 1), and is very close to her family.



Cheryl says she uses her experiences as a Type 1 when dealing with people who come to see her in the clinic. "I know what it's really like. **I think you listen with different ears if you've been there and done**

that."

She is "**loud and proud**" about her diabetes, and really likes to SHOW people what they can do while still having Type 1 by living it, particularly those who are newly diagnosed. "I never try to hide the fact that I have diabetes, and I think this sometimes helps others, particularly young people, as they then feel they're not alone."

"I like to show the world that you can have Type 1 and still be healthy and happy. We're smart, we don't deliberately get sick. I want people to be looked at for what they CAN do, not what they can't, and I like to live that everyday."

Cheryl also likes to pass on things that she learns from other Type 1s, "acting like a conduit". Cheryl knows people who do all sorts of things despite having Type 1, including doctors, lawyers and even one guy who leads expeditions in Antarctica!



A strong **advocate** for Type 1s, Cheryl also says that though we're making great strides forward, there is still a long way to go. "We need to get the information to the right people, and make sure they listen."

Issues that Cheryl feels passionate about include:

- Ensuring appropriate treatment for Type 1s in hospitals: "We are NOT Type 2s."
- Getting pump costs down for those without private health insurance: "**We are entitled to the best treatment possible.**"
- Making continuous glucose monitoring available to those who need it: "It is currently quite expensive."
- Improving access to income protection insurance.

Cheryl's greatest achievement is her children, and winning this award! She says "I've won other awards before, and I'm very appreciative and grateful, but **nothing beats being recognised by other Type 1s** - it's a wonderful thing!"

Congratulations once again to Cheryl for being the inaugural winner of the T1DN's Seed Award in 2010.



Other Seed Award Finalists

Congratulations also to these four inspiring people who were finalists:



Gabrielle Hodson in Western Victoria organised a personal meeting with the federal health minister where she advocated for people with Type 1 in regional areas, catching Minister Roxon's attention by explaining how all the travel during her recent pregnancy added up to driving from Melbourne to Vladivostok! [Read more.](#)



Katherine Iscoe in Perth found time between her PhD studies to put on the wonderfully successful [Diabetes Fits](#) camp in 2009, and again in 2010.



Monique Hanley in Melbourne founded [HypoActive](#) to inspire and enable the Type 1 community to live a more physically active lifestyle, whilst also being an inspiration to many through her own extraordinary achievements in cycling.



George Valiotis has been a passionate advocate and spokesperson for people with Type 1 diabetes for many years, especially in his home state of South Australia where he is currently a Vice President of DASA.

About The Seed Award



The Seed Award has been instigated by the Type 1 Diabetes Network in recognition of the critical role that **Melinda Seed** played in the development of the T1DN over many years. The award recognises people who have shown the strong values and commitment that Melinda has been contributing to the Type 1 community for many years.

Melinda volunteered her time, passion and expertise towards providing support, information and a voice for the Type 1 community for 10 years. Melinda was a founding director of the Type 1 Diabetes Network, as well as its first Treasurer and a long-standing moderator of the Reality Check online community. Melinda recently stepped down from her formal roles to pursue other interests.

The Seed Award commenced in 2010 and will be awarded annually to people who have:

- Provided support, information and/or a voice for the Type 1 community.
- Demonstrated initiative and intelligence in their endeavours.
- Been committed to the principle that people living with Type 1 diabetes can and should have a voice in the decisions that affect our lives.

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